

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SUBJECT 1. Yantarnyy Labor Camps and Surrounding Area
2. Production of Insulators for Atomic Energy Plants

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a report on the Yantarnyy N 54-52, E 19-57 labor camps, including a sketch of the layout of the camps and vicinity. The report also contains information on the town and the various plants of the Yantarnyy Combine, including the amber plant which produced insulators for atomic energy plants.

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YANTARNYY LABOR CAMPS AND SURROUNDING AREA

Location

1. The Yantarnyy Combine (Kombinat) (N 54-55, E 19-55), called Palmnicken until its occupation by German troops in 1944, was comprised of two labor camps, one for men and one for women. The Combine was located 65 kilometers northwest of Kaliningrad. The women's camp lay about 30 kilometers south of Krasnoarmeysk (formerly Telsit, N 57-37, E 34-27)

[?] the men's camp was about three kilometers east of the women's camp

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The Combine area was a tract of land about ten by five kilometers. The soil was sandy and the terrain was flat with gentle undulations; there were no trees and very little other vegetation. The closest river

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was a small one ten kilometers southeast of the men's camp and about three kilometers south of Sovkhoz No. 3.

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Seasons

2. Spring, lasting from March to June, was characterized by gentle north winds, light rains, and generally good weather. The maximum temperature was 25° C., the minimum was 10° C., and the mean was 18° C. In summer, from June to September, there were gentle, dry, south winds and rainstorms. The maximum temperature was 35° C., the minimum was 20° C., and the mean was 30° C. The fall season, from September to December, had gentle north winds with abundant rain, sometimes accompanied by hail. The maximum temperature was 20° C., the minimum was 10° C., and the mean was 15° C. Winter, from December to March, was variable with gentle moist winds, showers, and light snows. The maximum temperature was 18° C., the minimum was 5° C., and mean was 10° C.

Demography

3. The women's camp contained about 400 prisoners, among whom were Germans, Poles, Soviets, Estonians, Lithuanians, and Latvians. Most were political prisoners although there were also some ordinary prisoners. No distinctions based on nationality, religion, or politics were made. The camps and the work area were guarded by 250 MVD troops, commanded by a colonel named Beechin (fnu), who was assisted by Commander Filipenki (lnu) and other commissioned and non-commissioned officers.

Construction

4. The two labor camps were built in 1947 by the prisoners who were to occupy them. Two years later, barracks were still under construction in order to house camp employees who lived in the town of Yantarnyy (N 54-52, E 19-57) about 500 meters southwest of the women's camp.

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The town, of 3,000 inhabitants, covered a wide area. The houses, usually of two to four stories, were built of brick and stone. Private dwellings and the camp barracks had wooden walls about 20 centimeters thick, filled with pressed sawdust. The stoves in the kitchen and in the barracks were made of red and white brick. The camp factories were also built of red brick.

Public Utilities

5. A water tank, located near the town, serviced the labor camps, its factories, and the town. It was built of red brick and was about 30 meters high. The water was pumped from an artesian well into the tank. The pipeline measured about 250 millimeters. There was no purifying station or any other water tank in the area.
6. The town of Yantarnyy and the two camps were supplied with electricity by a powerhouse located near the town, which produced alternating current of 220 watts and 380 volts. [redacted]
[redacted] The machinery [redacted] had been installed before World War II. [redacted]
[redacted] In 1948, a 5,000-volt high-tension line was strung from Yantarnyy to Kaliningrad.

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7. The camps and the town had dial telephones. [redacted]

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8. Garbage from the camps and town was collected in boxes. [redacted]

Communications

9. Yantarnyy had a radio station broadcasting from 0700 to 2400 hours to ships, the camps, and the town. This station connected with Radio Moscow for domestic news. [redacted]
[redacted] Each camp had two or three loudspeakers placed on posts outside and a loudspeaker in each barracks. Only the barracks chief could touch the loudspeaker.
10. A first-class, asphalt highway, about nine meters wide and in excellent condition, led from the town of Yantarnyy to Kaliningrad. Road signs written in Russian and German were located at forks. [redacted]
[redacted] the highway had many curves. There were also dirt roads inter-connecting the camps, factories, town, and other parts of the area; these joined the highway.
11. There were several bridges in the 65-kilometer stretch between Yantarnyy and Kaliningrad. [redacted] they were of reinforced concrete [redacted]
12. A double-track broad-gauge railroad for transporting both passengers and freight ran from Yantarnyy to Krasnoarmeisk and Kaliningrad. The Yantarnyy station was about six kilometers southwest of the Combine. It was a one-story brick building about 30 by ten meters. The station had about eight or ten sidings. A single, standard (Soviet) gauge led from the station to the camp area producing sand from which amber was extracted (see paragraph 24 below) and passed through the Amber Plant area. There was a double track beginning at the electric powerhouse. Goods shipped on the railroad were transported from the town to the camps in 1,500, 3,000, and 10,000-kilograms trucks.

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13. There was a bus service twice daily between the Combine and the town.
14. There were no airports in the area.

Security

15. To enter the Combine area, it was essential that the ordinary passport /sic/ have on the cover a red diagonal band, slanted from left to right. [redacted]

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16. Only MVD personnel guarded the camps and the town. There were no militia forces in the town. Special restricted areas (see below) were guarded by naval garrison troops who wore dark uniforms with vertical brown stripes. The MVD personnel and sailors had numerous fights when on liberty. On Soviet holidays, the guard was reinforced and machine guns were mounted in the watch towers. The barracks housing the 250 MVD troops was a three- or four-story red brick building with a red tile roof and a jail in the basement. The building measured about 40 by 15 meters and was located to the north of the outskirts of the town.

17. [redacted] there was a firehouse in the town.

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Military Restricted Areas

18. A naval base and barracks were located to the west of the Yantarnyy station, next to a small wood. The base had been constructed by Soviet technicians: [redacted]

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19. Combined air and naval maneuvers, in which about 60 vessels and 400 jet and conventional aircraft participated, were held in the Baltic Sea about August 1947, lasting from 0900 to 1300 or 1400 hours. The ships included seven or eight cutters, a great number of torpedo launches, and other types of boats [redacted] Live ammunition was used. All planes towed a white cloth target with black strips; ships towed a light target barge. [redacted]

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20. Batteries of long-range, 250- to 300-millimeter, heavy artillery were emplaced on the coast, about seven kilometers northwest of the women's camp. [redacted]

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[redacted] There were powder magazines and barracks for servicemen; [redacted]

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Medical Facilities

21. Each camp had an infirmary accommodating between 15 and 20 persons, attended by two health officers and two doctors; one of the doctors was a prisoner. Patients requiring surgery or those seriously ill were sent to the town of Yantarnyy which had a three-story hospital; [redacted] The most common illnesses among the prisoners were grippe, pneumonia, and dysentery.

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Recreation and Sports

22. The only sports were soccer and six-man handball; participation was voluntary. A Soviet woman gave talks on international politics based on daily reading of Pravda; attendance was voluntary. Each camp had a small library. Movies on all subjects except politics were shown daily and prisoners paid admission except on two days a week when they were free. There was no military training.

Work Performed by Prisoners

23. Prisoners in the Yantarnyy Combine were engaged either in extracting amber, working in the Amber Plant, Machine Plant, Varnish Plant, Lumber Mill, or Garage. Following is a description of the various installations and of the work performed.

Extraction of Amber

24. About 200 male prisoners, all Soviets, were engaged in the extraction of amber from sand in a small area, about five by seven kilometers, located between the men's and women's camps. Two engineers who had been employed on the Volga-Don canal [redacted] at [redacted] supervised the work which was done by means of six excavators, each with 24 scoops having a one-cubic-meter capacity, made mobile by four double tracks or standard gauge. Two of the tracks were 50 meters below sea level. During the eight-hour work day, six 18-ton railroad cars were loaded every ten minutes. [redacted]

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25. Three high-pressure water pumps, capacity unknown, were used to wash out the amber which appeared in veins and the water was then drawn off by means of three or four extraction pumps. The amber which floated because of its low density was removed with the sand, loaded into cars, and sent to be washed and separated from the sand. [redacted]

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The pieces of clean amber were taken to the Ovegetitel'naya Plant to be ground to powder, then formed into bars of different colors, about 50 centimeters long and four or five centimeters wide. This operation was carried out in a two-story brick building equipped with a freight elevator. Three [redacted] electric furnaces, equipped with adaptable metallic molds, were used to change the amber powder to a solid and give it the desired form. Each furnace had a diameter of about 1.5 meters and was about three meters long.

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Amber Plant (Yantarnyy Fabrika)

26. About 250 women prisoners and 20 non-prisoners worked at this plant which was a two-story red brick building with basement, about 50 by 20 meters. The basement contained ten ordinary lathes and there were 20 lathes on the ground floor; the second floor contained offices and storage space. [redacted] Fifteen of them were used to make the insulators for atomic energy plants (see Figure No. 1 on page 10). The insulators were a light, transparent yellow, estimated to resist 2,000 volts. They were seven millimeters wide, 30 millimeters high, and seven millimeters thick with an inside diameter of three millimeters. (See Figure No. 2 on page 10.) They were shipped to Moscow and were packed with fine saw and tissue paper in pinebox boxes, measuring 30 x 30 x 30.

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In addition to producing insulators, work at the plant consisted of the selection of amber for making jewelry, such as necklaces, bracelets, clasps, and chains.

Machine Plant (Mekhanicheskaya Fabrika)

27. Parts for excavators, cars, and all types needed by the other plants in the Combine, were made at the Machine Plant which employed the following prison labor: about 100 lathe operators, 26 fitters, 30 electricians, 20 forge operators, four fitters, two inspectors, and six office workers. In addition, 26 non-prisoners worked at the plant. The work day was eight hours. The plant was a one-story red brick building, about 125 x 30 x 20 meters, equipped with about 60 metal working lathes of Soviet make, types DIP-200 and DIP-300, and the following German machinery:

10 milling machines
 10 drill presses
 2 power saws
 6 drop hammers - 3 of 300 kg pressure
 2 of 150 kg pressure
 1 of 1,500 kg pressure

3 electric furnaces to make blocks of amber
 2,000 lathes for the production of rifle, pistol, and cartridge cases, contained in the storehouse.

10 special lathes, about eight or ten meters long, used for the turning of cannon barrels, located in the street in front of the plant.

1,000 new antiaircraft cannon of about 84- and 86-millimeter caliber, which were stored in the open air; a thick layer of protective grease kept the cannon in good condition.

Varnish Plant (Lakovyy Zavod)

28. This plant had three laboratories in which amber was melted and acids, alcohol, and liquid and solid varnishes in different colors were produced. It employed about 25 persons, both prisoners and free personnel, on an eight-hour shift. The plant was a one-story red brick building, about 35 x 20 meters.

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Lumber Mill

- 29.. About 35 prisoners and free personnel worked an eight-hour day at the Lumber Mill, producing railroad ties and planks of various kinds to make doors, windows, and furniture. It was a one-story wooden building, about 25 x 20 meters, with the following machinery, all of Soviet make: two saws, each with 12 blades; three circular saws, and four universal planing machines.

Garage and Repair Shop

30. About 75 employees, including drivers, worked in this building which was of red and white brick, about 20 x 60 meters. About 40 Soviet trucks were stored here.

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Legend to Sketch

31. Following is the legend to Enclosure No. 1, showing the layout of the Yantarny labor camps and the surrounding area. The numbers in parentheses are keyed to those on the sketch.

- (1) Highway to Kaliningrad.
- (2) Church for free personnel.
- (3) Housing for free personnel.
- (4) Watch tower above barbed-wire entanglement.
- (5) Watch tower above barbed-wire entanglement.
- (6) Excavator for the extraction of amber (yantar).
- (7) Water pump.
- (8) Water pump.
- (9) Watch tower above barbed-wire entanglement.
- (10) Barbed-wire entanglement.
- (11) Watch tower at the men's labor camp.
- (12) Watch tower at the men's labor camp.
- (13) Double-track railroad, 50 meters below sea level, in the area where amber was extracted.
- (14) Single-track railroad in the area where amber was extracted.
- (15) Baltic Sea.
- (16) Coast artillery.
- (17) Restricted military area.
- (18) Women's labor camp.
- (19) Area where amber was extracted, 50 meters below sea level.
- (20) Excavator.
- (21) Men's concentration camp.
 - a) Disciplinary jail.
- (22) Roadway.
- (23, 25, and 27) Water pumps.
- (24) Transformers.
- (26) Disciplinary jail in the women's labor camp.
- (28) Machine shop where repairs were made.

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- (29) Barracks for MVD troops; barracks measured about 20 x 40 meters.
- (30) Machine shop where repairs were made.
- (31) Water pump.
- (32) Watch tower above barbed-wire entanglement.
- (33) Transformers.
- (34) Water pump.
- (35) Transformers.
- (36) Town of Yantarnyy.
- (37) Yantarnyy club and movie theater.
- (38) Repair garage, measuring about seven x 40 meters, built of red brick.
- (39) Acetylene laboratory.
- (40) Repair plant forge shop.
- (41) Repair plant fitting shop.
- (42) Entrance to barbed-wire enclosed area.
- (43) Storehouses, measuring about 20 x 50 meters, built of blackened red brick and roofed with corrugated sheet iron.
- (44) Watch tower above barbed-wire entanglement.
- (45) Electric powerhouse.
- (46) Plant where amber was washed and separated from sand, measuring about 25 x 50 meters.
- (47) Storehouses measuring about 20 x 50 meters.
- (48) Repair plant measuring about 25 x 40 meters, made of brick.
 - a. Offices
 - b. Lathes
 - c. Records
 - d. Secret shop
 - e. Showers
 - f. Lathes
 - g. Secret shop
- (49) Varnish plant measuring about 35 x 25 meters.
- (50) Watch tower above barbed-wire entanglement.
- (51) Amber plant, measuring about 25 x 50 meters, built of brick.
- (52) Watch tower above barbed-wire entanglement.
- (53) Baltic Sea naval base, located about six kilometers from the town of Yantarnyy.
- (54) Electric powerhouse.

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- (55) Repair garage, measuring about eight x 40 meters, made of brick.
- (56) Materiel storehouses.
- (57) Lumbermill, measuring about 20 x 40 meters, made of brick.
- (58) Metal plating and pipe shop.
- (59) Watch tower above barbed-wire entanglement.
- (60) Materiel storehouses.
- (61) Church.
- (62) Reservoir of potable water.
- (63) Watch tower above barbed-wire entanglement.
- (64) Railroad station, one-story brick building.
- (65) Church
- (66) Sovkhoz No. 3.
- (67) Krasnarmeisk Yantarniy highway. The river was about three kilometers away.

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Figure No. 1

One of 15 Lathes Used to Make Insulators for Atomic Energy Plants

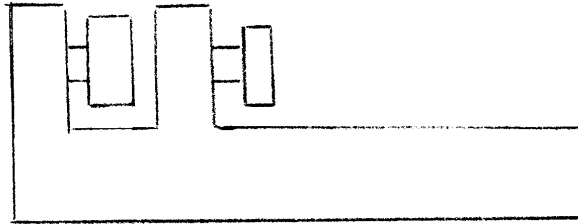
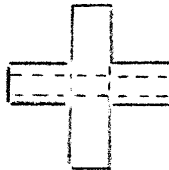


Figure No. 2

Insulator for Atomic Energy Plant Built at Yantarny Labor Camps



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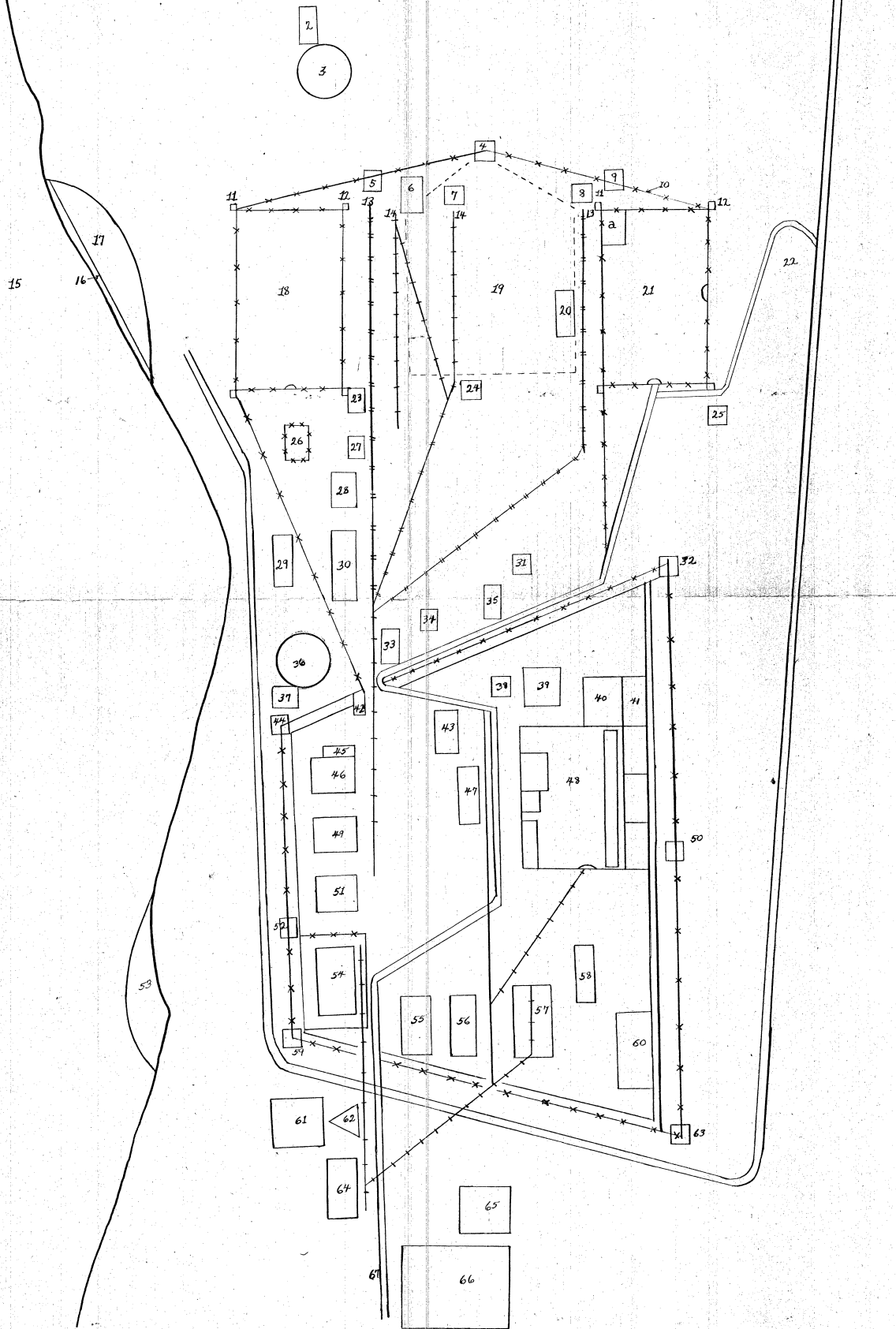
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Layout of Yantarnyy Labor Camps
and Surrounding Area

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Enclosure 1

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